DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 903 FL 007 698

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TITLE Controversial Issues in Modern Language Teaching.
INSTITUTION Alberta Teachers Association, Edmonton. Modern Language Council.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Modern Language Council (November 1975)
JOURNAL CIT Alberta Modern Language Journal; v14 n3 p14-37 Spr 1976

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiolingual Methods; Cultural Education; *Fles; Grammar; Individualized Instruction; *Language Instruction; *Language Teachers; Modern Language Curriculum; Modern Languages; Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods; Written Language

ABSTRACT

This paper first addresses the issue of the contradictory nature of informed opinion and advice in the foreign language field today. It goes on to consider such controversial topics as the introduction of the written symbol, teaching the language versus teaching about it, teaching culture, the usefulness of FLES, and individualization. The discussion of each topic unites the author's own views with current arguments. (DB)

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Controversial Issues In Modern Language Teaching

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This article is a reproduction of the author's presentation to the November 1975 Annual Conference of the Modern Language Council held at the Banff Springs Hotel.

Research in modern language teaching. How relevant is it? Please, don't get up and leave. I'm not here from my ivory-towered castle to inform the

peasants of the marvelous learning of the castle magician. And I'm no Merlin myself. Let me quote from Leon Jakobovits (1970) to put my perspective to you. He writes:

> The conclusion that will be presented will stress the fact that most of what we know about teaching comes not from the experimental laboratory, but from the teacher's experience in the classroom. Here, as in other areas of education, practical knowledge far outstrips the specific contribution of organized research.

From a man who devotes so much of his time to research and writing that is an important statement.

What, as teachers, causes our scepticism is the contradictory nature of much of the advice given to us by those who publish their research findings. For example, in a recent book, we find this statement:

> The idea that listening and speaking should be emphasized first and throughout the program, and that reading and writing can be by-products... is a sound idea that should not be abandoned at the drop of two or three psychologists' hats. (Green, 1973, p. 12)

In the same book, we read:

> The experimental group had listening-speaking activities and, from the second day of instruction, reading activities as part of their daily classwork. The control group..., used listening and speaking activities.... The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in auditory comprehension.... (Lipton, 1973, p. 120)

Admittedly, the first statement refers to reduced achievement in oral production and the experiment to increased auditory comprehension. However, some contradiction exists in the advice we are given. Furthermore, the contradiction is aggravated by the results of another experiment which reports that using written responses instead of oral responses at the beginning of a program resulted in better achievement in all four skills later (Postovsky, 1974).

In this experiment, the author compared two classes, one of which had extensive oral practice from the beginning (the Control Group); in the other group, members were asked only to produce in writing what they had learned. Classes were tested after six weeks and again after twelve. Among his conclusions is the following statement:

> In learning Russian adult students develop better overall language proficiency when oral practice is delayed in the initial phase of instruction, provided that this pre-vocal period is devoted to training in aural comprehension and written practice from spoken input.

What do we hear from the classroom?

One of the most frequent complaints of classroom teachers is that they cannot get their students to speak out. And we have all tried a variety of techniques to overcome the problem. Maybe it is time to quit trying to force something, to accept the fact that eleven- or fifteen-year-olds do not like behaving like parrots, or two-year-old children. Let us ensure that they understand what is being said, and leave them to respond orally in the second language when they are ready. After all, what was your most serious problem the last time a native speaker of French, or German, or Ukrainian spoke to you. Right! It was not asking him a question; that was easy. It was understanding his answer. Let me tell you a story from my own experience.

Some years ago, I had occasion to "supervise" two elementary classrooms where French was being taught. In the first one, the teacher greeted me as follows: "Bonnjewer Monnsewer", and I am not kidding. When it came time to ask the class some questions about the lesson that had just been taught, every student asked was able to answer. Every one. Sure, their accent, though better than their teacher's, was poor, but they could understand and did respond comprehensibly. In the other class, the teacher was a French major and had spent a year in France, and the students made beautiful French noises, beautiful. But NOT ONE could answer questions put to him in French. These cases were extreme, I admit, but IF I have to make a choice, I'll take the comprehension instead of the beautiful noises. By the way, a warning about the early introduction of speaking and its possible inhibiting effect on students is

made in a most useful, carefully-controlled study undertaken over a period of seven years in Montreal, but I will be making further reference to it later (Lambert and Tucker, 1972).

Let us stay in the classroom. If you think there may be something worth trying in this suggestion, you could check it out yourselves with beginning classes next fall. Try one class following the approach of trying to get students to speak from the beginning, and one in which you give them the freedom to choose. For junior and senior high school students, Postovsky's approach of using written responses in French might work. For elementary students, particularly at the Grade Four Level, the sheer mechanics of writing take so much time that responses in English, or selecting from prepared statements the correct written answer, might be more efficient. Of course, they have to <u>see</u> the correct written answer first, but would that do any harm? Perhaps it would help to prevent that other problem we find so commonly, of students devising their own phonetic script in order to have something to help them remember. It is not all students, but those who are eye-oriented rather than ear-oriented would not be penalized by a refusal to recognize their natural learning style. I am not suggesting that <u>every</u> student be required to write <u>everything</u> down. At the beginning, the student can make the choice, but if writing things down suits his natural learning style, there can surely be little, if any, harm in letting him do it <u>right</u>.

5

Some of you will perhaps remember the Tan-Gau method. It was very popular, particularly in Oakville, Ontario, some fifteen years ago and formed the basis for the first "Chez Hélène" programs. It was based on the notion that the teacher talked and asked questions in French, and the students replied in English until they were ready. It worked, in that students felt free to answer questions and certainly came to understand a great deal of spoken French. In addition, when responses in French did eventually come, they were spontaneous. In a class I taught at the time, the first response in French came to the question: "De quelle couleur est le pantalon de Jean?" The answer: "They're bleu." However, there was still one student at the end of the year who had hardly spoken a word of French in his twenty minutes a day for a year, so I felt it to be a bit uneconomical of time. Were I to have the opportunity to try it again, I would do more to encourage students to use French, but still without unduly forcing the unwilling. As Bruce Bain points out, this amalgam of the two languages (They're bleu) is normal, and is soon corrected by the learner (Bain, 1975:1).

Before we get too far from the subject of introducing the written symbol, let me add a bit more to the opinion of when and how to introduce it. Of recent years, we have been persuaded of the importance of the pre-reading period, the "primacy of speech," and the difficulties of interference from the mother tongue, if we do not first ensure a mastery of the new sound system. This has resulted in a complete absence of the written word from the first two or three years in most elementary classes, the first year or more in many beginning junior high school classes, and a month or two in some beginning senior high school classes.
I agree that there is much justification for not overemphasizing the use of written language at the outset. With some reservations, I agree with the principle that students should be asked to read or write only what they have already heard and said. However, I can find no objection to beginning students, even beginning elementary students, seeing the words that they have learned to say and hear. Some imaginative teachers of elementary classes have colored mobiles in their classrooms with groups of related words printed on them, thus providing at the same time an attractive decoration and the possibility of an incidental learning situation in which the students can associate sound and written symbol.

Others have their group of pictures illustrating various weather scenes beneath the heading: "Quel temps fait-il?" And so on.

Later, students can be asked to copy, or be provided with a copy of, words, phrases or sentences, providing not only a welcome variety of activity but also a memory aid, particularly for the student mentioned earlier whose learning style emphasizes the visual. In elementary classes, such early efforts at writing the language might well be accompanied with illustrations, produced by the student or found by the student, to create an attractive record of what he knows. He will be able to see what he knows, which is a source of comfort to many. In addition, he will be able to show what he knows to others, particularly his parents, to whom he is unlikely to be able to demonstrate his spoken knowledge. Finally, in this stage, I can see no harm in using his written recording as a visual cue for speaking. In plain words, he can read what he has written, or what he has been given in writing. What a boon this would be in the testing program. How much simpler in an audio-comprehension (or discrimination) test to pick out the written symbol than the picture that was so difficult to create in the first place. That is but a minor gain, however, in relation to the attitudinal gain of the student whom we have been conditioning in practically every other subject area since he started school to learn by way of the written word.

At a later stage, the student can be expected to produce in writing anything he has heard, said, and seen, as well as variations of them. He can be expected to read anything he writes. There are many, many kinds of writing activities used in the early years of mother tongue instruction which can be used at this stage of a student's development in a second language, thereby adding more variety to the program, particularly in providing students with the opportunity to create something of their own.

In summary for this aspect, let me report what a group of colleagues from the elementary school and I worked out as a reasonable sequence in a Grade Four, Five and Six program. In Grade Four, we agreed the student would be permitted to see anything he had learned. There would be no demands on him to do anything

about it. In Grade Five, we expected him to be able to read anything he had learned, and he would be permitted to write anything he felt would help him. Finally, in Grade Six, we expected him to be able to produce in writing anything he had learned. There is one other experience with the use of the written symbol that I would like to tell you about, in the hope you might consider it, and perhaps try it out to see whether it works for you and your beginning classes.

For some years now, in my methods courses, I have begun with a few sessions teaching a language that the students do not know, so that they can again capture the feeling of what it is like to be a complete beginner in another language. Forgive me if I do not make public what language it is. Part of the fun is for them to guess. Up to this year, it has been taught with a strictly oral approach. Students were expected to hear and say only. This year, I made a slight change. During the initial presentation, I used graphic symbols occasionally, with the idea that students might focus on a particular sound problem and connect it more quickly if it were visually presented. Two examples were the use of the letter t to point out a t - d distinction, and b or v to point out that distinction. Of course, the familiar alphabet has to represent the sound in question. At the end of the first lesson, I also gave a written representation of what had been learned. At the end of this experience, I found that this year's group of students initially learned the subject matter in half the time of previous classes, and the review period in the following classes was cut by more than half the time.

I know that there are many other variables that I have not taken into consideration, but at least this time round we learned as much in less than half the time. I must add that I have committed the same sort of sin occasionally in junior high classes, that is, showing students a word in writing while they were still making bumbling efforts to say it, and it seemed to work there too. For those of you who have been convinced of the absolute necessity of witholding the written symbol until after the sound system has been mastered, I throw out the challenge of trying it out to see what happens. I would be glad to hear of your experience.

Another issue of long standing now is that of teaching the language or teaching about it. From the student's viewpoint, it can be phrased as learning the use of the language or learning its grammar rules.

The argument still proceeds. Nowadays, it is phrased as the audio-lingual versus the cognitive approach, the one based on behavioristic psychology, stimulus-response activities, the other on cognitive psychology, rule-governed behavior. The behaviorists see language learning as habit formation, the cognitivists see language learning as acquiring knowledge of the rules of language. Support comes for each approach from differing schools of linguists. The unfortunate aspect of the debate has been the "either -- or" position taken by many supporters of one side or the other. Sensible teachers have not been caught between the two; they have maintained good practice in spite of the theoretical debate. Obviously, there is not language use without a stimulus of some sort to which a response is needed. A child born to two mutes, growing up in isolation, would not learn language. So there is truth there. And there is truth too in the statement that much practice is needed if a learner is to become fluent. Do you remember learning to spell in your mother tongue? Obviously, you know the rules of English grammar (if that is your mother tongue) or you would not be able to talk or write. An example demonstrating this point could go something like this: "Colorless deep frogs sleep easily." Obviously, it does not make sense, but you can see that it <u>is</u> grammatical, whereas the following is not: "Easily frogs sleep colorless deep." You <u>KNOW</u> the rule, but I defy any of you to explain it in the next twenty seconds. In other words, there is a distinction between knowing and applying the rule, and verbalizing it.

In mother tongue learning, you have a great deal of time for such learning. In second language learning, there is much less time, so, <u>at some point</u>, it may be useful to explain the rule. Psychologists tell us that we remember more easily things that have meaning. I do not believe that; you try memorizing the following ten English syllables:

Lan putiski forwa sumar inber

and then:

The public and the times were ripe for change.

Where do the two kinds of activity, drill and learning the rule, fit into classroom activities? It is possible to distinguish two stages in language learning. The first is the acquiring of basic information and skills; the second is applying the basics in a new situation whether it be linguistic or cultural (Valdés, 1974).

I must stress immediately that I do not believe these two stages need to be separated by a great deal of time. They should go on together, the first stage slightly in advance of the second. If you accept the idea of the two stages, then it seems to me that the drill, audio-lingual pattern practice type of activity fits stage one. The thinking, rule application fits the second stage. Moreover, I believe that the second stage can develop from the first, often without any overt explanation. Application of what has been learned should lead to true communication, however simple. And that is one major, if not the major objective in language use, and communication. Language is not a subject to be studied for itself, except by linguists and language teachers, who are applied linguists. It is a tool for use in communication and self-expression.

Let me interject here a thought concerned with drill and communication. Some time ago, we made a change, in my opinion a desirable change, to break away from the puzzle-solving approach in teaching another language in which students were presented with first language material to be rendered (a carefully-chosen word) in the target language. We became instead concerned with a variety of drills which I will sum up under the heading of substitution drills. Often these were conducted in the language laboratory, so that everyone could practice at once. After all too many years, we found out that students were often bored by these drills, and would frequently complete the drills accurately without undertanding at all what they were saying. Recently, while observing a student teacher, I did precisely that. I completed several such exercises in German with at least 80% accuracy without knowing the meaning of more than about 10% of the vocabulary, so I know it is true.

Here is a pattern practice taken from a textbook currently in use, Ecouter et Parler (Côté, Levy, O'Connor, 1968):

mon			ma			gentils
	oncle			tante		
ton		et	ta		sont bien	sympathiques
	cousin			cousine		
notre			notre			amusants

Some teachers use the table as follows:

Teacher: Mon oncle et ma tante sont bien gentils.
Class: Mon oncle et ma tante sont bien gentils.

Teacher: Ton oncle et ta tante sont bien gentils.
Class: Ton oncle et ta tante sont bien gentils.

Teacher: Notre oncle et notre tante sont bien gentils.
Class: Notre oncle et notre tante sont bien gentils.

et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

This is not communication. A different situation is possible, still using the table as a useful source of questions. I am assuming that we have taught the meaning of all the vocabulary used.

Teacher: Jacques, est-ce que ton oncle et ta tante sont bien gentils?
Student: Oui, mon oncle et ma tante sont bien gentils.

Teacher: Marie, pose une question à Suzanne.
Marie: Suzanne, est-ce que ton cousin et ta cousine sont bien sympathiques?
Suzanne: Oui, mon cousin et ma cousine sont bien sympathiques. Or hopefully, "Oui, ils sont bien sympathiques," or maybe simply, "Oui".

This may not be a real life situation, but it can be when students put the questions and select their own answers, especially if you insist that their responses be true. At worst, it is a lot closer to communication than simple repetition. And it is easy to devise a great variety of questions, just from the table. The possibilities are as follows:

mon			ma			gentils
	oncle			tante		
ton		et	ta		sont bien	sympathiques
	cousin			cousine		
notre			notre			amusants
3 x 2		x	3 x 2		x 3	=108

If we add just one more variable, "aimables" for example, in the last column and two to the second and fourth columns, "père et mère," "frère et soeur" for example, we have this possibility:

Mon Ton Notre	oncle cousin	et	ma ta notre	tante cousine	sont bien	gentils sympathiques amusants
3 x 2		x	3 x 2			x 3 =108
	père frère			mère soeur		aimables
3 x 4		x 3		x 4		x 4 =576

In a class of 30 students, there are almost 20 possible questions PER STUDENT that students can be trained to look for and respond to. In my opinion, that provides for the possibility of real communication. The arithmetic for this use of tables I found some years ago in Mackey's Language Teaching Analysis (1965). The idea of using the tables as a basis for teacher to student and student to student questions came to me as a result of developing questions for the transposition phase of the Voix et Images de France program (Guberina and Rivenc, 1962).

When you communicate, you make choices about what you say. That's the essence of communication. We argue that it is possible to create real or almost real communication once students know a fair amount of vocabulary, and we tend to wait until that time to begin using the language for communication. But it is not necessary to wait. A student can start making choices as soon as he has learned "Yes" and "No".

Tu t'appelles Marie? Oui - Non.

Du Heiszt Karl? Ja - Nein.

You are doing that kind of exercise already, I am sure.

From that stage, the process can develop as the students acquire more vocabulary, particularly if we present them with a few contrasting qualifiers, quick, slow; big, small; early, late; and so on. One of the most useful questions to encourage students to find something of their own to say is "Pourquoi?" Another is "Comment?" And in German, "Warum?" "Wie ist er?" or "Wie sieht er aus?" The more extensive the student's vocabulary, the easier the task becomes. And when the student says, "Non, je m'appelle Doug," "Nein, ich heisze Doug," he is applying the rules of the language that he has learned through the drill practice you have designed for him.

So where is the controversy? It is not really in the classroom, where a sound combination of drill and application is taking place. Very frequently, however, we do not stop to analyze what we are doing in the classroom in order to answer the theoretical critics. Jakobovits (1974) suggests that this is what we ought to do. He proposes a new field of research for language teaching/learning based on an analysis of the talk that takes place in the classroom. I think this may be a promising field of activity. There is the danger for some of us that we might be like the centipede who walks fine on her hundred legs until someone asks her how. Then, she begins to think about it, and who can think about a hundred things at once? You might try, however, taping a lesson and try answering the question Jakobovits poses in his article:

> What happens in explanations, elaborations, and justifications; in asking leading questions; in legitimizing pupil requests; in disagreeing; in loud-talking by the teacher; in enactments of the pupil role by individuals; in reporting and its structure; in verbal problem-solving routines, and so on.

This kind of analysis, Jakobovits says, "puts pedagogic theory back to the practical sticking place (the classroom) which is, after all, where it belongs." How often could you undertake that kind of research for yourself and your students, once a week, once a month, once a semester? It might be fun to try it.

Still an issue this year is the usefulness of introducing languages in the elementary school. Most of you have read reports of the British investigation

(Burstall, 1974) that states there is no advantage in beginning instruction at age eight as opposed to age eleven. It has been quoted often. Very infrequently do we hear of other findings of this report, for example, the correlation between the headmaster's attitude and pupil achievement.

One study showing that FLES students did not maintain superiority over non-FLES students in high school suggests as a reason that from grade eight on "FLES students must mark time while the non-FLES students catch up." (Oller and Nagota, 1974) Does this happen in any school system you know?

In spite of the criticisms, our elementary teachers continue to do as effective a job as possible in the circumstances provided them, and rightly so. We know from experience that there is an advantage, and there are research studies to support our experience. A study of adult learners of Japanese showed a higher rate of achievement among those who were multilingual during their childhood (Jacobsen and Imhoof, 1974).

A most interesting study is reported by Landry (1974) who shows a relationship in elementary students between instruction in second language and ability in divergent thinking, that elusive quality we like to encourage. He found similar results in a study of verbal creativity (Landry, 1973). Similar encouraging results comparing bilinguals and monolinguals are reported by Bruce Bain of the University of Alberta (Bain, 1975:2).

One of the most thorough studies, carried on over a period of six years, reports the experience of children in St. Lambert, an English-speaking suburb of Montreal. Here, through the action of interested parents, children received their schooling in French, beginning with kindergarten which was entirely in French. Some study of English was added as the children proceeded through the grades. The report (p. 7) refers to earlier studies in which bilingual French children proved to be "much superior on measures of intelligence" as well as in other areas, but these were bilinguals as compared to monolinguals. Although a temporary superiority was found in measures of creativity for the pilot class, this was not maintained. However, the authors were able to conclude (p. 152):

> After five years, we are satisfied that the Experimental program has resulted in no native language or subject matter (i.e. arithmetic) deficit or retardation of any sort, nor is there any cognitive retardation attributable to participation in the program. In fact, the Experimental pupils appear to be able to read, write, speak, understand, and use English as competently as youngsters instructed in the conventional manner via English. During the same period of time and with no apparent personal or academic costs, the children have developed a competence in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding French that English pupils following a traditional French-as-a-Second Language Program for the same number of years could never match....
>
> There is no question that given opportunities to use French in diverse social situations, the Experimental children, and others following them in the program, could become indistinguishable from native speakers of French in their oral expression, and at the same time they would profit fully from instruction presented in either of their languages. They could, in other words, easily become equally competent in all features of both languages.

And if such competence in French were not pay-off enough, when it came to a measure of attitudes, there were additional gains without losses: "relative to the English and French controls, they were less ethnocentric and biased toward their own ethnic group" (p. 158); "they had essentially healthy views of themselves" (p. 159); "One lesson children can learn is that history can very easily be biased and selective" (p. 162); they are becoming both English Canadian and French in selected ways" (p. 163); "important nonethnocentric attitudes are being fostered" (p. 163). One could go on with the list, but there is one other major result which I would like to report, because it deals with another controversial issue: the question of Time.

I have referred to this problem on other occasions (Petherbridge, 1974). Here is a quick review of the facts: before entering school, a child has an average of ten hours a day, seven days a week for six years in which to experience language. That amounts roughly to 21,840 hours. If we assume that a usual beginning age for learning a second language is nine,

or grade four, we need to add another 10,920 hours, for a total of 32,760 hours. Even the most generous estimate for a nine-year language program, and I want to emphasize that this is a most generous estimate, amounts to 800 hours, one fortieth of the time in language experience before beginning to study a second language and one eightieth of the time in language experience in the mother tongue by the time a student completes grade twelve. Small wonder students are not bilingual at the end of the program. In summary:

	Hours
AGE 0-6	21,840
AGE 7-9	10,920
Total Mother Tongue Before Another Language	32,760
Nine Year Program in Second Language Grades 4-12	800

In his study of divergent thinking, Landry (1974) found no difference at the grade four level between FLES students and non-FLES students, which led him to the conclusion:

> Apparently, not only must a child have experience with a second language, but also he must have had sufficient experience to make the relationship between second language learning and divergent thinking abilities significant.

The Burstall report referred to earlier also states: "The sheer amount of time spent learning a foreign language appears to be the dominant factor affecting success, not the age at which the period of learning began." Where will that time come from, if it is not in the elementary school? I find it hard to imagine an answer, particularly if you think of the effect on a grade seven or grade ten pupil, for example, of having him spend all day for a year learning French, and learning French. Lambert and Tucker report:

> Once the children reach a certain point in the development of bilingual skills, the occasions to

develop their competence seem to snowball. The Control group (i.e. French-as-a-Second-Language) children apparently have not developed their competence sufficiently to experience the snowball effect. (1972, p. 196)

What is even more intriguing in that report, however, is the attitude of the children themselves. Let me quote again:

> ... the Experimental classes show more eagerness to continue learning French.... In contrast, the Controls apparently want to reduce the time spent on French or to discontinue French study entirely .... (p. 200)
> Too little French turns out to be too much for them, while a great deal of French has, it would seem, merely whetted the appetites of the Experimental children. (p. 201)

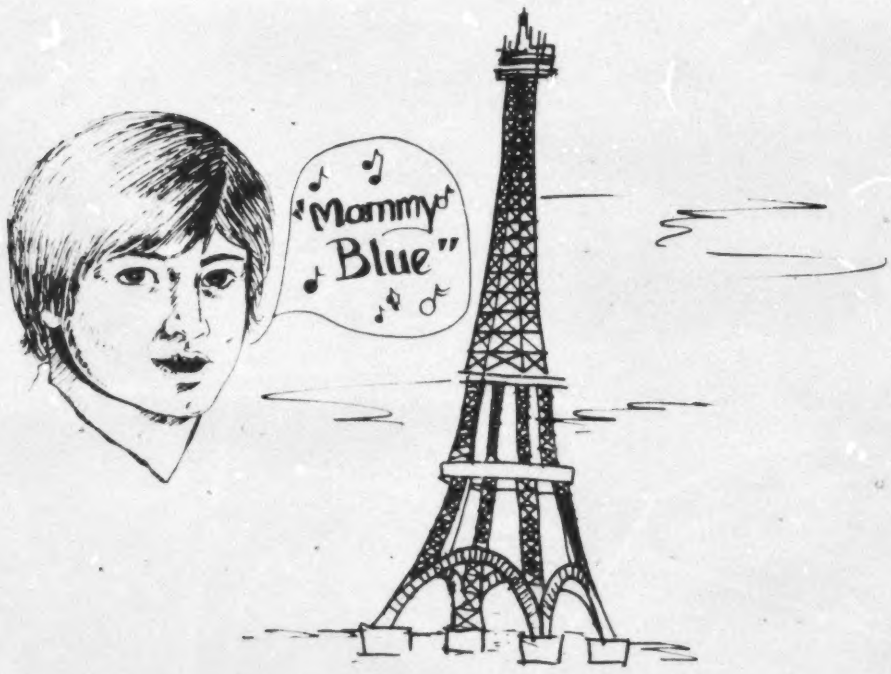
There appears to be a solid answer to the critics of our program: not to abandon the teaching of second languages, but to provide enough time, so that the language becomes a useful tool rather than an end in itself.

Consider the kindergarten or grade one programs that exist already in places like Edmonton, Calgary, now Lethbridge, in which the instruction is in French. The time, five hours a day for a school year of roughly 200 days, would give the student more time in one year than Second Language learners get in nine years. Then, if we continued some instruction in second language and through the second language, students would perhaps arrive at or close to those in the Montreal experiment, "they could ... become equally competent in all features of both languages."

Part of the success of these programs is to be found in the use of the language as a tool for doing other things, and that too is an important consideration. In second language classes, the study becomes rather like that of algebra or geometry which, as children, "we knew we were never going to use again." Arising out of the question of how much time we have for teaching second language is another issue, that of teaching the culture of the speakers of the language. What culture should be taught, when, and how? One of the long-range objectives of teaching another language

is to provide the tool by which the learner can enter directly the culture of the language, it being considered that language is an integral part of culture, in fact, the expression of culture. Frequently, we take altogether too narrow a view in defining what we mean by culture. It is not just the literature, history, art, drama and music of the country of origin, particularly of past centuries. In fact, if we think in terms of student demands for relevance, these aspects would take second place. We live in a "now" world, and we need to set our priorities in the present, and approach both past and future from that position.

Since our first objective is to have students learn language, let us begin there with our search for cultural content, and it is not hard. As soon as a student is introduced to the distinction between "tu" and "vous", "du" and "sie", he experiences something new, if he is a native speaker of English. All the people in the world now have to be placed in a new category. They are no longer just "you". That requires a mental adjustment for the learner. I had a friend who told me his experience of having reached the stage



of friendship in which he used the "tu" form with a girl, and made an error one evening as they were walking along the street, and used the "vous" form. His girl friend's reaction came as a shock. She slapped his face, right there in public. She thought, you see, that he was giving her the brush-off. Students ought to know that "mon vieux" is a term expressing friendship among men, and has nothing whatsoever to do with age. I am not fluent in German, so examples are harder to find, but students could learn, for example, that "Donner und Blitzen" mean something other than Santa Claus' reindeers. And that kind of understanding is more important to me than looking at pictures of "Châteaux de la Loire" or Ludwig's Castles. So perhaps are eating a Swiss fondue or bouillabaise or wiener schnitzel, and certainly more fun. What music do your youngsters learn? When I was in Europe in 1971-72, I heard "Mammy Blue" in French, German, and Spanish. I suspect more European children know "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" than know "Sur le pont d'Avignon." "Asterix", the French comic strip, is amusing to children, and like most comic strips portrays current social, economic, and political problems. Have you got "Peanuts" in second language edition in your school?

If you are a French teacher, you do not have to go to Europe for your cultural material. There are ordinary Canadian boys and men who play hockey in French in Legal, Alberta. So do many N.H.L. players. You know that, but do your students? In Bonnyville, you can buy all your groceries in French, and there are Alberta children who go to school in French. You know that, but do your students?

The Department of Education is seeking ideas for ACCESS (Alberta Educational Communications Corporation). It would be helpful if the language teachers as a group asked for programs showing Albertans who conduct their daily lives in French, German, Ukrainian, or whatever. What a stimulus such programs could give to your other language class. Is there a speaker of the language you teach living nearby? Find him or her, and arrange for your students to chat with him or her, during class. Why not? Here are some ideas that come from a French program in Calgary:

> ... going to the Stampede, visiting Heritage Park, losing a watch at school, getting a bad report card, dressing for a dance, buying new clothes, cheating on a test, taking gymnastics, taking a train trip" (Jaremko, 1974).

You may be wondering at this stage whether I am not mixing two topics, the teaching of culture and relevance to student interests. I am, but it is not a mistake. There are French and German and Ukrainian speaking people who visit Heritage Park. People who speak those languages, especially young people, are interested in going to parties and buying new clothes. Ask them some time. Let them build up a centre of interest for study, and help them to present it to other members of the class, or other classes. There are two major pedagogical pay-offs in such a process. First, the students' interest in what they want to study is likely to be much higher than in a teacher-selected topic, such as the uses of the imperfect. Incidentally, you can work that into their project. To take one example from the Calgary list: "While I was dressing for the dance, the telephone rang five times. My girlfriends wanted to know what I was going to wear." Lovely examples of different tenses in that sentence. Second, they will be learning the language for use in a situation which they see as potentially real. In other words,

they will be learning language for a purpose, rather than just as another "school subject" which has no relation to life.

This is not to suggest that the more "cultural" cultural aspects should not be presented. In a workshop in which some teachers and I were preparing a new elementary French program, one of our members made a list of available films and video tapes. Our idea was to use them as available, between units, so that, over the years, a great number of such items would be presented, a day now, a day some other time. Some of you will remember the Can-Can girls from the Modern Language Council conference last fall, and, of course, the youngsters from the same school in lederhosen who performed the polka. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has produced several cultural units. Some of you may be familiar with "Le Temps des Fêtes" or "Chansons et Chansonniers". Last spring, I came across a catalogue with such a rich variety of materials for both French and German that I made up a requisition of over two thousand dollars for items ranging in price from two dollars something to over two hundred. Naturally, I have not got them all, but they are beginning to come and will continue as money becomes available. Even examining the catalogue was a stimulating experience, and that does not cost anything but a ten-cent stamp.

There are a number of catalogues in Alberta schools illustrating games and activities designed to help youngsters learn mathematics, language, and other school subjects. Many of them are readily adaptable to second language use. If you have not the time, and that is very likely, take a period or two of class time and help your students do it. The pay-off in interest, I am sure, will be worth the time invested.

If you develop a variety of activities such as I have been suggesting, then you are already considering the last controversial issue that I want to deal with, but briefly, that of individualization. On that subject, Frank Grittner (1971), one of the best known writers on second language teaching/learning, had this to say:

> The evidence indicates that it is sheer fantasy to expect an unaided teacher to get up some elaborate

kind of individualized program in the regular classroom situation without first making such changes as providing teacher aides, increasing the budget for equipment and materials, and greatly reducing the pupil-teacher ratio.

I can almost hear you thinking: Right on, man; that's the way it is. And you are right. But did you know that you are already doing individualization? Every time you ask Bill this question instead of that question, you have individualized for Bill. Every time you select a group of three or four students to make a presentation of a particular dialogue, you have individualized for them. Every time you give Harry a smile of encouragement, you have individualized for Harry.

Here is my summary of an article on teacher attitudes towards individualization (Griffin, 1974). Teachers generally react to the literature on individualized instruction as unfair and unrealistic, but they do accept some aspects, such as small group instruction, mini-courses, learning packets, and the idea of trying some of the techniques of individualization. Of course, they do, they always have. Many of you will have met Gerald Logan or his idea on individualization as a result of his visits to Alberta. He is perhaps the practitioner par excellence of individualization. He and a half-dozen colleagues are responsible for literally hundreds of individualized courses in the high school they work in. In his very practical short book on individualization, he points out that individualizing instruction is a "do it yourself" project beginning with whatever you can do and developing as you go along (Logan, 1973). You might start out by simply dividing a text into appropriate sections and letting students be responsible for learning the material with your help and guidance. In that way, you have the chance to work with individuals or small groups, instead of talking at the whole class. And that is a beginning, and you can develop from there as time and energy become available. With Logan, I agree that you can only go along the road of individualization as far as the circumstances permit.

The circumstances include a great variety of factors, like the current program purchased for your classes, the size of the classes, the atmosphere of freedom or authority in your school, the expectations

of students, parents, and administrators (including the school board), and not the least, your own personal style of teaching which results from your own training, experience and personality. It is the one factor over which you have the most control, therefore, the one for which you feel most responsible, and the one you can modify if need be. However, indications are that it is the factor which probably needs least changing. Let me offer one more quotation:

> Teachers ... manifested ... supportive attitudes towards pupils. They favored student's self-motivation and open interaction in the classroom, and they cautiously moved towards a student-centered concept of instruction.
>
> Students ... confirmed that FL teachers displayed student-centered classroom behaviors and that they actualized learning by being sensitive to the needs and abilities of students. (Papalia, 1973)

With very rare exceptions, those are the people I see in language classrooms as I visit the schools. You are fine human beings interested in children and in teaching children another language. As fine human beings, you are sometimes over-sensitive to criticisms that come from outside the classroom, but your essentially sensible perspective brings you back to equilibrium. I believe you are doing a great job and that you will continue to do so. Because of that, I respect you and love you, as you respect and love the children in your classes and the task you perform.

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